

2023 APR 20 AM 9:47

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GRAFTON, MA



**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Town of Grafton**  
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**Finance Committee**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, March 15, 2023**  
**6:30PM**  
**Conference Room A**  
**AND**  
**via Zoom**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm by Chair Mark Haddad. In attendance were Chair Mark Haddad, Vice Chair Greg Marr, Clerk Angelina Correia, Skip Currier, Victoria Duckworth, Nick Rioux, and Sue Robbins. Dan Cusher arrived at 6:52pm. Staff in attendance were Town Administrator Evan Brassard, Finance Director Mary Lauria via Zoom, Assistant Town Administrator William Blake, and Administrative Assistant Amber Diffenderfer via Zoom.

**Review the FY24 Library Budget with Library Director Beth Schreiber and Finance Committee Vice Chair Greg Marr**

Ms. Schreiber presented the FY24 Library Budget with a 6.66% total increase, which she stated is primarily due to personnel. Ms. Schreiber stated that she has budgeted for a new 18-hour-per-week position in the teen room and would like to increase her assistant's hours per week from 19 to 35. Ms. Schreiber also spoke about the importance of appropriating at least 13% of the library budget to educational materials to secure state aid, which Ms. Lauria estimated to be \$40,000 in FY24.

Mr. Haddad asked for an update on the building. Ms. Schreiber described the HVAC issues, the renovations for ADA compliance, and the installation of a humidifier and makerspace doors. She noted that the roof leak seems to be fixed after altering the green roof.

Mr. Marr and Ms. Schreiber discussed the process to spend state aid and how it may be used.

Ms. Duckworth and Ms. Schreiber discussed the cost of the library's programs.

Library Trustee Dana Wilson stated that the Community Preservation Committee may be able to approve funding for repairs to the cupola.

Mr. Marr asked Ms. Schreiber if she had a job description for the proposed Assistant Library Director position. Ms. Schreiber spoke about her assistant's qualifications for the role.

### **Review the FY24 Blackstone Valley Tech Budget with Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick, Anthony Yitts, and Lorna Mangano**

Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Yitts presented the FY24 budget for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District and noted the recent increase in enrollment of students from Grafton. Dr. Fitzpatrick stated that the budget would be finalized at the BVT Budget Subcommittee Public Hearing on March 23, and he does not anticipate any changes.

Dr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Yitts, Ms. Duckworth, Mr. Haddad, and Ms. Robbins discussed the recruitment and admission process at BVT, which is competitive.

Ms. Correia asked what percentage of students go to college after BVT. Dr. Fitzpatrick responded that 100% of their students go to college and the industries will often subsidize their college. Mr. Yitts and Dr. Fitzpatrick explained that many students come in wanting to learn a trade and develop new interests during their time at BVT.

### **Continue Review of the FY24 Town Clerk Budget**

Mr. Haddad presented the Town Clerk Salary Survey with an average salary of \$82,554. He noted that this average is not weighted for communities that are directly competitive with Grafton. Mr. Currier highlighted that Grafton's position is 35 hours per week while others are 40 hours.

Ms. Lauria stated that the Town Clerk receives \$1,800 per year in stipends. She also stated that the Town Clerk's salary was initially \$77,332 in the FY24 budget, and the next step raise would bring the salary to \$79,261.

Mr. Currier made a motion seconded by Ms. Correia to set the Town Clerk's salary in the FY24 budget at Grade 7, Step 5 (\$77,332). Motion passed 7 – 0. Mr. Marr abstained.

### **Review the FY24 Blackstone Valley Tech Budget (Continued)**

Ms. Correia suggested finding a way for students to access other trade schools if they are not accepted at BVT.

Mr. Currier and Ms. Robbins discussed how vocational schools have changed over time.

Mr. Haddad recommended that Ms. Correia's idea be discussed with the School Committee.

Mr. Cushner agreed with Ms. Correia's concern that students who do not get into BVT might not have a pathway into these trades.

### **Reserve Fund Transfer Request: Poll Pads for Elections**

Mr. Currier made a motion seconded by Ms. Robbins to approve the reserve fund transfer request by the Town Clerk for \$8,225 to purchase five additional poll pads. Motion passed 8 – 0.

### **Bills Payable: Bushel 'N Peck, 3/11/2023**

Ms. Robbins made a motion seconded by Mr. Marr to approve payment of the invoice from Bushel 'N Peck for \$161.69. Motion passed 8 – 0.

**Schedule Upcoming Finance Committee Meetings**

Mr. Haddad stated that the Finance Committee had been invited to meet with the Select Board, School Committee, and Representative Muradian during the March 21 Select Board meeting to discuss Chapter 70 funding.

**Presentation of Revenue Projections by Town Administrator Evan Brassard**

Mr. Brassard presented the five-year financial forecast. Mr. Haddad and Ms. Robbins appreciated the quality of the spreadsheet. Mr. Brassard stated that Ms. Lauria was responsible for the document.

**Consider Vote to Recommend the FY24 Operating and Capital Budgets**

Mr. Haddad stated that the Finance Committee would vote on the budget at their public hearing to review the Spring Town Meeting Warrant.

**Schedule Upcoming Finance Committee Meetings (Continued)**

The Finance Committee agreed to schedule their public hearings to review the Spring Town Meeting Warrant on Wednesday, April 12 and Thursday, April 13.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm by Mr. Haddad.

Meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Finance-Committee-6>

A full recording of this meeting is available at: [https://youtu.be/1dZPF\\_0CqJA](https://youtu.be/1dZPF_0CqJA)